

# Evaluation Express Award Application

To request Evaluation Set-Aside funds via the Evaluation Express Award, complete the following application. Please limit your application to three single-spaced pages.

*Submit your application to [evaluate@od.nih.gov](mailto:evaluate@od.nih.gov)*

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## Part 1: Identification

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Project Title: First Phase Evaluation of the DCB/NCI *Activities to Promote Research Collaborations (APRC)* Program

Applicants: (include name, title, IC or OD office, building, room, phone, fax, and email):

Kelly Kim, Program Administrator, Division of Cancer Biology (DCB)/NCI, Executive Plaza North, Room 5025, 301-496-5473 (Phone), 301-496-1224 (Fax), [kimke@mail.nih.gov](mailto:kimke@mail.nih.gov)

Dr. John Sogn, Deputy Director, Division of Cancer Biology (DCB)/NCI, Executive Plaza North, Room 5050, 301-496-8636 (Phone), 301-496-8656 (Fax), [js150x@nih.gov](mailto:js150x@nih.gov)

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## Part 2: Purpose of the Evaluation

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*Indicate the type of evaluation proposed and the rationale for conducting the evaluation.*

**Type of Evaluation** – Indicate the primary type of proposed evaluation:

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|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Needs Assessment         | 3. Process Evaluation |
| 2. <u>Feasibility Study</u> | 4. Outcome Evaluation |

**Rationale for the Evaluation** – Briefly describe the rationale for conducting the evaluation (e.g., Congressional mandate, stakeholder interest, general interest).

The rationale for this feasibility study is to develop the best overall approach and the most appropriate measures for conducting an outcome evaluation of the APRC program.

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## Part 3: NIH Program to be Evaluated

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*Provide a brief description of the NIH program or activity under consideration, including the documented goals of the program/activity.*

**NIH Program/activity** – Name and briefly describe the NIH program/activity to be examined (e.g., organizational location, history, program size/budget, # of FTEs).

Program name: Activities to Promote Research Collaborations (APRC)

Program description: The most novel and exciting discoveries in cancer biology often derive from the integration of disparate fields of research. In order for such advances to be made, investigators with varying interests need to engage in collaborative research interactions. NCI's Division of Cancer Biology (DCB), which supports research on the basic mechanisms underlying the onset and progression of cancers, encourages and promotes the initiation of such collaborations through the APRC program. The program provides funding in the form of administrative supplements to DCB grantees to establish new consortia with investigators from complementary fields and to conduct joint research that would not have been possible in the absence of the pooled set of skills and

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expertise of the consortium. The program began in 1998 and has an annual budget of approximately \$1 million - \$1.5 million.

**Program goal(s)** – Specify the documented goals of the program or the program’s intended effect(s). Indicate which goals are relevant to the evaluation.

The documented goals or intended effects of the APRC program include 1) generation of innovative concepts and advances in cancer biology (new knowledge generated from collaborative projects, as opposed to individual investigator-driven projects, is expected to be highly novel and groundbreaking) and 2) capacity building (increased productivity of program participants and enhanced ability of program participants to pursue other, future collaborations). All of the goals are relevant to the evaluation.

Both quantitative and qualitative research designs and measures will be explored. These would include approaches such as time series analysis of the number of publications co-authored by experts from other fields and other institutions to measure the level of PI’s engagement in collaborative activities over time (capacity building). The number of new patent applications and patents resulting from the APRC-funded project could serve as a measure of innovation. New grant applications in a novel area of study following the leads from the APRC-funded project and the success of those applications could be indicative of both innovation and capacity building. The “innovation” level could be scored based on expert reviewers’ assessment under the “Innovation” section in the Summary Statements. For new concepts published in journal articles, the “innovation” level could be based on ranking of the ideas by appropriate Program Directors who are knowledgeable of the state of the science in the area. Finally, surveys of the APRC participants could generate insights into the perceived values of the programs in terms of facilitating their ability to approach research in novel ways.

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### Part 4: Evaluation Design and Dissemination/Use of Results

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*Provide a list of key questions that you will address in the evaluation, a description of the study design, and your plans for disseminating and using the evaluation results.*

**Key Question(s) to be Addressed** – List the specific study question(s). These questions define what you are trying to learn from the evaluation effort and should be linked to the relevant program goals in Part 3 above.

What types of research designs and measures are most appropriate for evaluating the innovation level of new knowledge and ideas generated by the APRC supported projects?

What types of measures, data collection strategies, and analysis methods are most appropriate for assessing the capacity building outcome of the program?

**Study Design** – Describe the overall approach you intend to use to answer the key question(s) (e.g., data sources, statistical sampling information, plans for data collection and analysis). Please note if the evaluation will require any clearances (e.g., OMB Clearance under the Paperwork Reduction Act).

The project officer will hire and oversee a contractor’s performance in the following tasks:

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- 1) Propose specific study designs and best models for an outcome/impact evaluation; identify and refine quantitative measures; undertake preliminary collection of data in order to determine the utility of these measures and uncover any measurement bias.
- 2) Develop effective qualitative data collection strategies and instruments that would be in accordance with OMB clearance. Any and all qualitative measures will be considered including case studies, focus groups, and interviews, to name a few.
- 3) Summarize findings and incorporate final summary into a project description and statement of work for an outcome evaluation funding request/application to follow.

This first phase evaluation will not require OMB clearance.

**Dissemination/Use of Results** – Describe how you will disseminate the evaluation results and how the results of the evaluation will be used. Indicate whether or not you expect to make changes to the program based on the evaluation results.

The results of this feasibility study will be used to identify the best overall approach for a planned focused outcome evaluation to be undertaken if feasible. The outcome evaluation will address both practical and academic concerns. With respect to the practical concerns, the purpose of the outcome study will be to evaluate program success, and to assess the strengths and weaknesses/limitations of the program in order to identify ways in which it might be improved. With respect to the academic concerns, the purpose of the outcome study will be to test assumptions about the importance of network-learning in the innovation process and identify characteristics that make certain collaborative experiences more effective than others. In addition, we hope to determine whether the government, through programs such as the APRC, can play a powerful role in accelerating innovation in basic science research. The report of the feasibility evaluation will be posted on an internal NCI assessment and evaluation intranet website.

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### Part 5: Project Management and Budget Estimate

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*Provide a project timeline, information about who will conduct the evaluation, and a summary of the anticipated costs and funding sources.*

**Estimated Timeline** – Identify when each major evaluation task will occur, including expected start and end dates.

This feasibility study will require 3-4 months to complete. The project will begin upon receipt of funding.

**Project Implementation** – Describe how the project will be implemented (e.g., independent consultant, contractor selected via an RFP, task order contract). Provide the name of the contractor/consultant(s) (if known) and attach the Statement of Work (if available).

Negotiations with qualified independent consultants will commence upon award. The consultants who are deemed able to provide the best value within the identified timeframe will be selected.

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**Funding Amount Requested** – Provide overall costs by category, including direct labor costs, other direct costs (e.g., printing, consultants, meetings, travel), and indirect costs (e.g., fringe benefits, overhead, contractor's fee). Indicate the anticipated source(s) of these funds (e.g., Evaluation Set-Aside, IC budget).

The total costs of the project are estimated to be approximately \$50,000. For the detail as to how this estimate was derived, please see the spreadsheet that accompanies this application. However, until negotiations with qualified contractors are completed, a final budget is not available. Any costs in excess of \$50,000 will be covered by NCI funds.